

Fury Bound

by LucariaAura

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Summary: This is the story of Lucaria, a Soul Binder whose village and life were destroyed by Drago's violence. She and her dragon, Comet, team up with Valka and Hiccup in an attempt at revenge against Drago for killing her people and exterminating the rarest dragon species of all. (Based on How to Train Your Dragon 2)

1. Chapter 1

The flames. The heat. All I remember was the blistering, scorching pain burning through my skin, down my throat, turning my insides into liquid fire. I could not breath. Could not see. The only smell was the putrid stench of smoke and...flesh. Singed flesh. I could feel the hard wooden floor below me, ablaze with the fury of Thor himself.

I tripped, fell, heard the blood-curdling screams of my kin and the terrible cries of the dragons. The dragons...oh why did it have to be dragons?

A loud crack, like a tree branch snapping, like a lightning bolt freed from the hands of Thor, and my world went dark. Blank. Quiet. Empty.

My eyes fluttered open as I my consciousness was freed from the darkened void near death. I shielded my face from the white light flooding my unaccustomed eyes. A small noise came from beside me, a gentle purr, and a small nudge to the shoulder. I blinked, wondering if I was dead or alive. Mustering all my strength, I rolled over to my side, propping my limp body up on my elbow. Slowly, I pushed myself up into a sitting position, wondering from where this strength was emanating. It was then that I noticed the dark shape beside me, peering at me expectantly, almost worriedly. Clutching my ringing head in one of my hands, I tried to remember what had happened. To my despair, my mind was too stunned to recall much, so I returned my attention to the creature beside me.

Nudging my shoulder again, it licked the side of my cheek gently, turning it's head to the side, studying my face. The bright green eyes stared back at me, intently locked onto my face. Carefully, I raised a hand towards it, slowly holding it up in front of it's snout. Shaking it's head, it looked down at my hand, then back at me, before nuzzling my hand with a small snort.

A shudder ran down my spine as my memory began to return, timidly, as an unwary deer that has just caught the scent of danger. I shivered, noticing that I was draped in no more than a torn leather dress, blackened and burned and reeking of dragon smoke. Snowflakes swirled in the air around me, carried by a subtle breeze that knew no path. The iceberg below me sent a chill running up my entire body. The creature noticed my plight and curled around me, surrounding me in a blanket of warmth, sheltering me from the rising blizzard around. I felt safe there, in the arms of a creature of whom I knew not, or remembered not, and found peace in the rhythmic rise and fall of the creature's massive chest.

Whether from fatigue, or comfort, my eyes fell closed and I fell into a fitful sleep.

2. Chapter 2

When I woke up, drenched in a cold sweat, I noticed I was not on the snow-covered iceberg. I was in a cavern, soft grass under my feet, geometric rock patterns lined the walls, and a great icy ceiling rose high above me. Baby dragons flitted here and there, pausing only to glance at me before returning to their play. Glancing around, I noticed thousands of dragons that perched on outcrops of rock and grassy platforms. Many more flew about under the icy dome.

I picked out several species I knew, along with several others that were new and foreign to me. A faint thought pricked the back of my mind, and I realized my memory had returned. Every detail of that horrible night flooded back to me, and I sat there, face in my arms, knees tucked to my chest, crying at the thought of my lost kin and extermination of one of the rarest species of all dragonkind.

I heard a shuffle behind me, and I whirled around, prepared to fight. My nerves were still frayed in fear from the attack last night. I was staring into the eyes of a dragon, the rich golden orbs shifting, observing my face, evaluating threat. A low growl rumbled in it's throat, pupils narrowing. I backed away slowly, my foot landing dangerously close to the edge of the cliff face. Pebbles tumbled down the cliff. I turned back to face the dragon, now looking down upon me with fury in it's eyes. A black blur landed between us, snarling and growling, wings flared up protectively in front of me. The great orange dragon paused, confused. I was finally able to see the creature whom had accompanied me since last night.

Comet. That was her name. Comet, my dragon. She was protecting me.

The orange dragon recovered from its surprise, and advanced once again. Comet roared, planting her feet on the ground, eyes challenging. A masked figure appeared from behind the orange dragon, holding a hand up. Peering from the slits in the mask, the figure

reached a hand toward Comet, who snarled and backed even closer towards me. The figure halted, and rose up. They pulled their hand back, straightening.

I laid a hand on Comet's back, stroking behind her neck. She glanced back at me, a small, affectionate rumble coming from deep in her throat. I stepped in front of her, facing down the masked figure. I knew it couldn't be Drago, but if this were a dragon trapper...

"Who are you?" I gulped, trying to steady my shaking hands. "You aren't taking Comet. You'll have to go through me first."

The figure's reaction startled me. Instead of lunging at me, they laughed. The figure laughed, placing a hand over their stomach. They removed the helmet, and the face of a woman gazed back at me.

"I'm not here to steal your dragon. In fact, I'm quite fascinated. I've never seen a Night Fury before. Are they not the rarest species of all?" She approached Comet, running a hand over her snout and stroking under her chin. Comet cooed happily and nudged the woman's open hands. I opened my mouth to speak, but felt only tears well up in my eyes. I averted my gaze, peering down into the hot spring below us.

"They're...gone..." I barely managed to whisper.

"What?" She asked, looking up at me. "That's preposterous! That's...impossible..." Her voice trailed off as she caught the solemn look upon my face. "No..."

"We tried to be peaceful, tried to be fair. He left is no choice. We had to refuse. And then...he attacked. Dragons broke through the roof, setting our village aflame. No one survived..." I paused, feeling unworthy of my next phrase. "Except me."

"But if you all had Night Furies, how come they didn't protect you?"

I hesitated, nervous to release the secret that my people had kept for centuries. Ever since we had landed on our Isle of Night, my ancestors bonded with the Night Furies and befriended them. They had discovered a special magic on the isle, allowing them to bind their souls to the dragons they partnered with. We became known in legends as the Soul Binders, an ancient and tribal village full of dark magic. Some feared us, others sought to discover our secret, hoping to control dragons for themselves. Drago was one of them. He demanded we teach him our magic, or he would bring the wrath of dragons upon us.

We refused. He attacked. And I alone carry the secrets of my ancestors in my mind and in my blood.

The woman stared up at me, studying my face, able to see the sorrow etched into my brow, and into my eyes. "You must be a Soul Binder."

I looked at her suddenly, startled by her comment. How did she know? "But...how did you?..."

"Everyone knows the powers of the Soul Binders. The ability to join a

dragon and human soul into one, partnering with your dragon for life. This is common knowledge." Her smile faded, and a serious look crossed over as she turned towards me. "What most don't know is how dangerous this is. Binding the soul means binding the life forces of the two, and if one were to die...the other would perish alongside them. For a peaceful village, such as yours on the Isle of Night, this did not perturb you. You did not expect the hostility of others towards you, for you were keepers of peace and found no reason to fight. But when the fighting did occur, your dragons failed to help you. And they perished. What happened?"

I closed my eyes, trying to remember where the dragons were during the meeting. They were not in the hall with us, but they weren't too far away. "Fishing. They were fishing. The ocean isn't too far from our shores and our Night Furies grew up eating fish. While we were in the meeting, our dragons went to the shores to fish. Drago attacked us while our dragons were away. They all perished before our dragons could come to save us, causing the death of the Night Furies as well. The only reason I escaped was because..." I glanced over at Comet, whose wide eyes gazed at me. She knew what I was thinking, and what I was saying, and I could feel her own sorrow as I relayed the story.

"Comet never left my side. She stayed outside the hall, perched on the roof, waiting for me. When Drago's dragons broke into the hall, Comet dashed in and saved me. Recused me. Protected me. I wouldn't be here without her." I walked over and ran a hand down her snout, stroking her nose affectionately. She gave me a gently nudge and I wrapped my arms around her neck.

"What is her name?" The woman asked, smiling at me.

"Comet. And I'm Lucaria. Who are you?"

"I'm Valka. I live here, in the lair of the Bewilderbeast." She glanced around, laying her eyes upon the great orange dragon standing behind her. She placed a hand on the dragon's leg, and smiled up at it. She turned back to me. "This is Cloudjumper."

Comet cocked her head and walked up to Cloudjumper, staring up at him. Cloudjumper looked down, his eyes widening with curiosity.

"You said a Bewilderbeast live here?" I asked Valka, looking up at the icy ceiling above us.

"Yes, he built this dome to protect these dragons. They all live under his command." She walked towards the edge of the cliff, and I suddenly realized that the large white object I had thought of as an iceberg was the Bewilderbeast himself.

"Wow..." I breathed, unable to peel my eyes away from the royal dragon below me.

"Every nest has it's queen, but this is the king of all dragons!" Valka exclaimed, opening her arms wide. I smiled to myself, quite happy to be in the presence of such a rare and incredible dragon. But I remembered my sorrow and turned away, comforted only by Comet's presence. An idea pricked my mind, and I contemplated what it might mean. I took a deep breath before turning around to face Valka, who was looking at me with curiosity in her eyes.

"Valka...I have a question."

3. Chapter 3

Comet and I sped through the air, in perfect sync, zipping through clouds and gliding alongside the vast wingspans of some TimberJacks. I smiled as I felt the cool air brush my face, the wind whipping my hair and trailing off to the unknown behind me. I had been living with Valka for the past few months, and she was teaching me the ways of the dragons. She taught me tricks and facts about each dragon that I never could have fathomed.

Having grown up with Night Furies, there wasn't much Valka could teach me about Comet, but the wondrous things she taught me about the other dragon species awed me. She was so knowledgeable. She knew every secret each dragon had to show, and it made me wonder how long she had been studying them. I was intrigued by her relationship with Cloudjumper in particular. They shared a bond so strong, it reminded me of my homeland. Cloudjumper was always at her side, and seemed to understand and feel her presence as much as she felt his. They communicated wordlessly, as Comet and I did. I had only ever seen a bond as strong among my people. I stroked underneath Comet's chin, and she lifted her head, cooing lightly at my touch.

I needed no commands to communicate with Comet. Our minds were one, and my thoughts belonged to her as well. I laid low over her back, clinging to a small leather ring that hung around her neck. A small pendant hung from the front, a bright, brilliant green that matched her emerald eyes. A cluster of reddish-brown feathers hung from the base of her left ear, flying back and fluttering against my arm. The feathers were a symbol of my place among our tribe. My father was chief, fiercely protective of his people, and yet a keeper of peace. I could picture his soft brown eyes as he watched me grow alongside Comet. I could feel the tickle of his short, brown beard against my cheek as he rocked me to sleep each night.

I took a deep breath, remembering him perched in his tall wooden chair in the Great Hall. I remembered seeing the bright red feathers that hung from DarkFire's ears. DarkFire was his dragon, a dragon fit for the chieftain of our clan. DarkFire was strong, heavily built, and protective. Just like my father. But the memory that was blazed so vividly in my mind was too dreadful to recall, so with a heavy heart I forced myself to push back my thoughts of home.

I gently brushed the feathers with two of my fingers, retraining my eyes upon the vast ocean below us. I saw ships, sails splayed, and knew all too well of the dragon trappers who waited upon them. My mouth slipped into a frown as I saw a commotion on one of the decks. The trappers were running around in a frenzy, collecting spears and swords and pointing over the edge of the rail, into the water. The surface was bubbling and shifting, but we were too high in the air for me to discern what laid beneath the waves. Comet flew down, but I felt a growing apprehension as we approached the boat.

"Wait." The verbal command was unnecessary, as Comet sensed my premonition, but my suspicion manifested into words. We hovered above, in midair, as a great white mass surged up from the sea, blasting ice onto the tiny, now insignificant ships. The

Bewilderbeast.

We dove down a little closer, trying to get a better view through the dense cloud cover. Then I saw what the mighty dragon was after- a wooden fort situated on a small patch of land. Crossbows and spears and nets littered the fort, and dragon cries pierced through the armored walls. Anger surged up in me, and I fought to control my fury. Comet glanced over her shoulder at me, concerned. I sat upright again, watching the Bewilderbeast, wishing I could aid in the rescue of the dragons but fearful to intervene.

Icy blasts shot through the fort, sending splinters of wood flying in all directions. Swords and axes clanged against the ice as they dropped to the ground, forgotten as their wielders fled in terror. My chest tightened as the trapped dragons failed to appear. I scanned the ruins for any sign of them, worried that they had been injured by the ice. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eyes, I saw a whirlwind of color. From behind the icy pinnacles, hundreds of trapped dragons freed their wings, and relief flooded me as I saw them take to the sky. The Bewilderbeast, having saved the captive dragons, turned back and abandoned the now desolated fort. Comet flew down and landed on one of the icy spears, peering curiously below into the shattered wooden remains.

A razor net flew from the crevice in front of us, slashing Comet's cheek and slicing across my shoulder. I let out a pained cry, grasping my shoulder, losing hold of Comet. I lost my balance as Comet recoiled from the attack, scrabbling for a handhold, finding none. I plummeted down towards the jagged ice, my stomach rising up into my throat.

Comet let out a heart-wrenching cry and plunged after me, reaching out for me. I began to feel light-headed as I fell, time seeming to slow around me. Comet's panicked face appeared, dark red blood dripping from the slash across her cheek. I called out to her, scared, terrified, before I slammed against something below me and my world went dark.

4. Chapter 4

I awoke with a throbbing pain in my shoulder, and a dull ache in my heart. I sat up carefully, gingerly holding my bandaged arm, and cringed as the movement caused another burst of sporadic pain through my entire arm. I glanced around, and realized why my heart ached- Comet was not with me. Even now I could hear her cries, echoing in my head as she called for me from wherever she was caged.

Squeezing my eyes shut, I told her I was okay, that everything was going to be alright. She stopped wailing, but a whimper replaced her cries.

"You're awake."

I whipped around to face the sudden voice. A man, tall and burly looking, was leaning against an icy post beside my cell. He had strange tattoos on his over sized chin. He was looking down at me with casual interest.

"Release me now." I stated, plain and simple, standing upright. I

kept my eyes trained on him, and more specifically, the dagger under his belt.

"How about no?" He pulled out his dagger and swung it around his fingers, catching it in his hand and holding it up to the cage bars. "We've got an order of dragons to fill by tomorrow, and your stupid dragon came and blew the place to smithereens! How on earth are we supposed to fill the order by tomorrow now? Though I suppose..." He gave a sly glance back towards where he had Comet caged, "A Night Fury would suffice."

"Don't you dare!" I shouted, knowing my words were no use against him.

"What's stopping me?" He asked, a hint of a challenge in his voice. He swung around and stuck his dagger back in his belt, turning his back to me. I heard Comet whimper again. Even if I couldn't save myself, I had to save her. I looked around the cell. It was small, and it was metal all the way around. The only part not metal was an icy panel above me where the top was blasted off. It made an adequate barrier to a muzzled dragon, but for me...

Shouting came from outside the fort, and the Man ran to figure out what was happening. With a quick glance, I checked to see if any guards were around, and hastily lifted myself up using the bars. I reached up to the top of the cage, barely able to squeeze my torso through the crack between the cell top and the slab of ice. I wiggled through, straining to escape without drawing attention. I heard dragon cries from outside, and was worried about the trappers, but Comet was my first priority.

I quietly slipped through the icy remains of the fort, heading in the direction the man had nodded. He seemed to be my age, but with a cruel streak unknown to my kind. I finally turned a corner and found Comet strapped down and muzzled to prevent her from making an escape with her fire. She was not caged, thankfully, but chains and straps littered the floor, rendering her immobile. She let out another whimper, lowering her head to the floor as I approached. She was ashamed that she allowed this to happen, and I saw the streak on her right cheek where the razor net had hit her. I gave her a small smile, sinking to my knees and hugging her snout. She nudged me and closed her eyes, nuzzling into my arms. While reluctant to leave the security of our embrace, it was not safe. I had to free her from the chains.

Hard as I tried, I could hardly budge the muzzle that constricted her mouth. I spun around wildly, trying desperately to find something before the trappers returned and our window of escape disappeared. _Think Lucaria, think!_ I noticed a sword near the wall, slightly bent and obviously abandoned. Taking a deep breath, I picked it up, hesitantly walking over to Comet, who looked up at me with confusion.

It's okay, Comet. I won't hurt you. She lowered her head slightly, her version of a nod, and closed her eyes, waiting. I lifted the sword above my head, knowing it would draw attention to us. I paused, wondering if there was anything else I could do. Looking to my right, I caught a glance of a wooden shaft hidden under splinters of wood and ice. Praying for Thor to help me, I walked over and picked it up, revealing a spear head with a serrated edge.

Thanking Thor for his kindness, I rushed back over to Comet and began cutting the leather straps with the spearhead. If I could just rid Comet of these chains, maybe we could escape, but only dragon fire would be able to melt the chains...

I found a small gap where a metal ring connected the straps to the muzzle, and wedged the spearhead underneath. Comet let out a sharp whine as the opposite side cut into her jaw slightly.

"I'm so sorry Comet...but this is the only way to get it off..." I looked at her for permission, not wanting to go any further without her consent. She trusted me completely, again lowering her head slightly. I carefully sawed at the leather, trying to keep the opposite edge as far off her jaw as possible. Finally, there was a small _snap _as the leather broke, and Comet shook the muzzle off. She whipped around and blasted the chains with fire, melting them off into puddles of silver that pooled on the floor. Shouts came from behind us, and I knew we had to move.

I grabbed her collar and swung myself up over her back, lying down flat so she could fly as high as possible along the roof. We hugged the ceiling until we flew over top of the trappers, who had been dashing down the hallways towards us. Shouting, they turned around and chased after us, throwing spears and swords in useless attempts at stopping us.

My heart sped up as we finally escaped into open air, pounding as I saw archers aiming at us. I urged Comet higher, above their line of fire. Thankfully the archers' aim was dreadful, and we escaped unscathed. I turned around to make sure we had no pursuers, and saw faint movements going in the opposite direction. I thought I could make out two streaks, one blue, and the other black.

5. Chapter 5

Having finally escaped, the adrenaline rush that had accompanied the fear was wearing down, and the pain in my shoulder became excruciating. I gritted my teeth to keep from moaning, but I was unable to fool Comet. She sped as quickly as she could towards the Bewilderbeast Sanctuary, throwing anxious glances at me as she went.

I began to feel light-headed and faint again, swaying on Comet's back. I forced myself to focus on what lay ahead, to prevent myself from succumbing to the blackness creeping towards the edges of my vision.

The ocean swayed below us, broken at random intervals by icebergs or sheets of snow. Sparse islands dotted the surface, often covered with a layer of white that reflected the sun. It was always so bright during the day, and I preferred to fly at night, when there was only the faint, pale glow of the moon to guide us.

I saw a pair of Scauldrons rise from the icy water below us, gracefully gliding for a few seconds before diving back under the surface. I stroked behind Comet's ear. Seeing wild dragons made me nostalgic. I had never tried to tame a wild dragon, as Comet had grown up alongside me. Comet found me lost in the woods when I was

younger, merely a baby, when she was still young and small as well. Not all wild dragons are hostile, but the changewing I had accidentally encountered was not necessarily delighted to see me. It began to attack me, when suddenly a tiny black figure leaped from behind me and defended me, shielding me with with a small pair of black wings. The changewing seemed unintimidated, until the Night Fury let out a roar and snorted in determination.

The changewing, while not intimidated, seemed to decide against pointlessly attacking, and flew away with a screech. The little Night Fury turned to me, a small look of pride on her face. Being so very young, I did not fully understand what she had done, but I hobbled over and hugged her neck anyway. My father came crashing through the trees, calling my name and frantically searching for me. He halted when he saw me cuddling with the young Night Fury, a smile spreading across his face. "I guess you've found yourself a friend."

Comet and I have been inseparable since. She even refused to sleep in the stables by our house, preferring to sleep in my room, curled up on the floor beside my bed. I have never had a better friend or soul partner than her.

I looked up from my memories, and realized more time had passed than I had thought. The icy dome of the Bewilderbeast lair lay ahead, and the relaxing, safe feeling that came with the sight flooded me. Comet landed lightly upon the icy platform leading towards the kitchen, careful not to jar my shoulder and cause pain. I slid off, wincing. Valka was at my side in an instant, alerted to our presence by Cloudjumper, who had run up to greet us, realizing something was wrong.

"What happened?" She asked, hastily peeling off the ragged bandages and inspecting the wound. The razor net had not sliced too deeply into my skin, yet it left a thick red line across my shoulder and collarbone. It stung dreadfully. Valka grabbed some cloth bandages from a small basket in the kitchen, gently wrapping them around the wound as best as she could.

"The Bewilderbeast attacked a fort out across the ocean. Dragon trappers were stationed there, and quite a few dragons had been caught. The Bewilderbeast went to free them. Comet and I went down to examine the ruins, and we were attacked. A razor net was shot at us, and it cut Comet's cheek as well." I ran a finger along the gash on Comet's jaw, solemnly knowing it was my fault it had happened.

Valka caught the look in my eyes, and turned me to face her. She stared deep into my eyes, evaluating my expression. She could always read exactly what I was thinking. "This wasn't your fault."

"Valka, we were trapped. They caught us. Had there not been a commotion outside, and had my cell not been breachable, we would have been taken to Drago. It was my curiosity that led us into danger." I hung my head. "And I caused Comet harm." Comet looked up at me, forgiveness in her wide, green eyes.

"Lucaria, don't blame yourself. What if there had been another dragon still trapped? You may have put yourselves in danger, but you would have saved another dragon from Drago's command and freed them from cruel captivity." She lifted my chin up with a finger. "Be proud you are so brave as to risk yourself for another." She smiled.

"Thank you Valka." I returned her smile, giving her a hug. As we broke the embrace, it occurred to me how motherly she was. I had lost all of my family to Drago's attack, and she was filling the empty gap in my heart with her love and care. I wondered if she had any children herself. She never talked about it, and I wouldn't dare bring up anything so personal against her will. She turned towards Comet and Cloudjumper, who were comically chasing each other. Cloudjumper was not as enthusiastic as Comet, seeming to at least keep some of his dignity. Comet was jumping circles around him, playfully watching him swivel his owl-like head as she went around.

I smiled to myself as I watched them, happy that Comet found a friend in Cloudjumper, just as I had found a friend and mother in Valka. I walked through the kitchen, following Valka out to the main chamber of the sanctuary. Cloudjumper followed obediently, Comet still jumping around and even leaping up onto his back. He threw her a look over his shoulder, but she refused to jump down, so with a roll of the eyes he continued without question.

I plopped down onto the grass as we entered the expansive chamber ahead. I laid back, feeling the soft tickle of the green blades underneath me. Comet jumped off of Cloudjumper and curled around me, laying down beside me so I could prop myself up against her side just behind her arms. I lay against her chest, feeling her breathing beneath me as she lowered her head into her arms. I'm not one for big revelations, but it seemed everything was easier, calmer, more peaceful when she was around. I hid nothing from Comet, and she hid nothing from me. We understood each other to an extent seemingly impossible and unattainable between two creatures so different.

But we weren't all that different. She understood the world just as much as I, knew it's expansiveness, cherished everything it offered. She felt the joy of zipping through the air high above the rest of the world, up with the clouds and the sky and the sun, seeing the world from a perspective new and different each time. She felt sorrow from the loss of our family and friends, the isolation and fear that followed. She knew the symptoms of a broken heart, an abandoned heart, and through her own suffering and anguish sought to comfort me as best she could. And I tried to comfort her too, no matter the circumstance. It was this understanding, deeper than any I have ever known before, that protected me, sheltered me from tearing myself apart. I confided in her, and she listened, she knew my pain, shared my pain, and we relied on each other more than anything or anyone else.

"I love you Comet." I whispered, and her ear picked up slightly at the sound of my voice. She cooed and nuzzled even closer, placing her snout on my outstretched legs. I drifted off into a peaceful sleep, nestled in Comet's protective circle, calmed by her presence. The last thing I remember thinking before sleep swept me away, was a single thought:

I could not have asked for a better friend.

6. Chapter 6

When I awoke, a silent uneasiness hung over the sanctuary. It seemed

too quiet for my liking, and I realized Valka must have taken the dragons out to feed. Stretching and yawning, I hobbled to my feet, rubbing my sleep-weary eyes. Comet yawned, her teeth retracted. I stroked her neck and she playfully batted me with her tail. I pretended to tackle her, eventually ending up slumped against her shoulder. She let out a laugh, which echoed around the cavern.

I slowly got up, relieved that the pain in my shoulder was quickly fading. I hopped up on Comet's back, smiling as she shook her head excitedly, causing the feathers hanging off her ear to tremble slightly. We dashed out through the kitchen to our favorite icy platform, where Comet performed one of her favorite tricks: a vertical takeoff. I hugged her back, squeezing her sides tightly with my knees and clutching the strap around her neck. The thrill of such quick acceleration rushed through me, and I couldn't help letting out a joyous shout.

Once we had reached an acceptable height, we glided along, enjoying the cool winds on our faces. We went into a steep dive, pulling up just as Comet's wingtips brushed the surface of the water, sending up a splash of ocean spray.

Comet suddenly veered off and landed on a iceberg, ducking down behind a thick layer of ice. I dismounted and walked around to the front of the iceberg, searching the ocean for the ship Comet had hidden from. I walked to the tip of the iceberg while Comet slowly and carefully crept up behind me. I peered from the edge of the ice at the ship, startled to see a collection of dragons on the deck. I couldn't distinguish the dragons very well, nor could I hope to pick out any humans. But I watched from afar, trying to see what was happening. I called out to Comet, and she came up beside me, ears perked up and listening. I hopped on her back, and keeping low and close to the ocean, we flew closer. We stopped, still a good while away, but I was able to see more clearly. A motion caught my eye, moving in the air not too far from the ship, and I curiously looked over. A figure, clearly not a dragon, dropped from the sky, and I almost started to chase after it. But the figure extended what seemed to be small wings and flew down to the ship, grasping the sail and sliding down to the deck.

Comet and I both cocked our heads at the strange sight, and my heart leaped as my eyes retrained on the dragons on the boat.

Standing protectively beside the figure was a black dragon. A Night Fury.

My heart stopped beating for a second, and I peered closer, unsure if it was a trick of my eyes or not. I blinked several times, knowing it had to be false, had to be a figment of my imagination. But the dragon flew off and into the clouds, trainer in tow, and I knew my mind was not fooling me. But my chances to unite with the Night Fury had vanished, and wishing I had acted sooner, I turned back towards the Sanctuary. The whole flight home, questions pounded and revolved in my head.

_Who was that? Was I not the only one to survive? Who could it be? How did they escape? Why didn't they come looking for me sooner? Why were they on that ship? Who were the others? _ I had to force myself to stop before my questions overloaded my common sense.

As I neared the Sanctuary, I saw Valka and Cloudjumper. I almost flew up to greet them, when I saw another figure grasped in the arms of a dragon behind her. The dragons of the sanctuary flew behind her. Confused, I followed behind, but not so near as to cause suspicion or alert others to our flew into the Sanctuary, and I noticed Valka had her armor on. She only ever put her armor on when flying far enough out to deem it necessary. I decided to let her deal with what I supposed was a dragon trapper by herself. Comet and I returned through our normal shortcut, and we flew to a rock pillar in the center of the main chamber. She perched herself on the top, glancing around at the dragons that were returning and flying around. I hopped down, precariously perched on a rock ledge. The waters below me shimmered, and I slowly began climbing down towards a comfortable looking nook.

I lowered my feet down to gaps in the rock, my hand brushing the mossy surface, searching for handholds. The little nook I had chosen was not easily reachable, but I noticed a outcrop from where I could jump. I shimmied across a ledge, knocking dirt and pebbles off, hearing them hit the water below with a _sploosh_. Taking a deep breath, I continued, cherishing the exhilarating feeling of being high up, being able to climb freely, trusting in my own strength and skill. I understood why Comet loved flying so much.

I pulled myself up onto the rock outcrop, and it held steady, fused with the rocks behind it. The nook was farther away than I had first thought, but not too far away. Comet snorted from above, looking down at me. I grinned at her, accepting her challenge, then turned back to the task at hand. I took a step backwards, until my foot was aligned with the back edge of the rock below me. Taking a deep breath, I kept my eyes focused on the nook, determined as ever. I closed my eyes for a second, reopening them as I took one quick step forwards, and then another, and then I was flying through the air, and I felt weightless, until my feet hit the stone of the nook and I stumbled forwards.

Comet let out a cry as I landed and toppled over, afraid I was getting ready to fall off. But I merely landed on my bottom, letting out a ringing laugh. I scooted to the edge of the nook, dangling my feet over, swishing them through the open air. Comet flew down and landed beside me, laying down and shooting me a look. I smiled smugly at her, knowing she thought I wasn't going to make it. She yawned and curled up beside me anyways, her tail hanging limply over the edge.

I looked at her, studying her black face. She was my friend, always had been, and I would never trade her for anything else. I took the green pendant that hung around her neck in my hands, turning it over to reveal thin lines on the smooth underside. I had carefully carved it there with a knife myself when I gave it to her. The lines read two names: _Lucaria & Comet_. I gazed at the small, graceful letters, smiling to myself. The green of the pendant reflected in my own forest green eyes, and I stroked the smooth surface of the stone. Comet lifted her head and glanced down at my hands, looking back up at me with her eyes widened. I pressed the pendant to her nose, and she closed her eyes. I leaned down and placed my forehead against the pendant as well. The pendant was a symbol of our unity, of our friendship, of our soul.

I saw Valka enter the sanctuary through a small tunnel, meeting up

with Cloudjumper. They leapt to the wall, Cloudjumper upside down and Valka perched on the base of his wing. She scanned the sanctuary, eyes missing me. Suddenly, another figure emerged from the same tunnel, stumbling out on one synthetic leg, pausing as he gazed upon the swirling cluster of dragons in front of him.

And a Night Fury followed. A Night Fury, slightly larger than Comet, emerged after the boy, watching the dragons as well. For an unknown reason, I leaned in closer to Comet in an attempt to conceal myself. Valka, sliding down with Cloudjumper's assistance, approached the boy.

I watched them curiously, never having met another outsider since Valka. I was unsure of the newcomer, not sure why Valka brought him to our sanctuary, if there was any chance he was allied with Drago. But I trusted her judgement.

Valka went over to the other Night Fury, studying it and laughing as it played with her. I couldn't help smiling to myself. I looked over at Comet, who had a mixture of excitement and anxiety in her eyes. I stroked her snout and ears, trying to calm her down. She showed no signs of willing to move though, and kept her eyes trained on the Night Fury below us.

I almost let out an audible laugh as Cloudjumper scared off a frenzy of baby dragons that were surrounding the new Night Fury. I looked over to Valka and the boy, who were gazing down upon the Great Bewilderbeast. The mighty being lifted its massive head, bringing it face-to-face with Valka and the boy. Valka bowed, as did the others dragons, and I felt the compulsive need to bow as well. The boy just gazed in wonder upon the majestic creature. After a few seconds studying the boy, it blew a small breath of ice upon his face, and I smiled, knowing it was a sign of approval. I myself had gone through the same ritual when I had first arrived.

Suddenly Valka looked at us, catching my eye. She turned to the boy, saying something to him, and he looked out our way, thankfully not spotting us hidden behind the rock. But Valka knew we were there, and I knew what was bound to happen next.

"Lucaria?" She called, a smile spreading across her face, "There's someone you need to meet."

7. Chapter 7

Timidly, Comet and I flew down to greet them. "Hi." I said, face lowered, looking up shyly at the boy. He smiled, extending a hand.

"I'm Hiccup, and this," he said with a gesture to the Night Fury behind him, "is Toothless."

"Lucaria." I whispered, taking his hand and gently shaking it. He was fairly tall and very handsome, with a mat of brown hair and piercing green eyes. I looked over at Comet, who was ineffectively trying to hide behind me. "This is Comet."

Hiccup walked over to her, extending a hand. Comet's eyes narrowed for a second, slightly startled by his movements, but she relaxed and

slowly pressed her nose to his palm in a gesture of friendship. He smiled, running his fingers up her snout and stroking her ears, strikingly similar to the way I did. I was awed by his natural kinship with dragons.

Toothless looked shy as well, glancing back at Cloudjumper, who, as expected, had a smug look on his face. Toothless peeked his head out from behind Hiccup, watching Comet with curious eyes.

Valka turned to me. "Lucaria, Hiccup is..." she paused, glancing over with affection towards the boy who was now playing around with Toothless, "my son."

My jaw dropped, eyes widened, and I let out an audible gasp. Quickly clamping my mouth shut, I stared at her, then back at Hiccup in a mixture of confusion and contemplation. I could see the similarities, but Valka's reaction to Hiccup had been queer, and I hadn't seen nor heard of Hiccup in all my time with her.

"I never knew you had a son, Valka. Why haven't you told me?"

She looked up at me with guilt and sadness in her eyes. "I meant to tell you sooner. I just wasn't sure how to bring it up. How could I tell you my old story of grief after you had just lost your entire family and village? I just didn't believe it to be fair of me."

I smiled at her. "Valka, I'm not upset. I'm grateful you cared enough to help me through my loss. But how come I've never seen him around?"

"That's because..." she paused, formulating her words. "Have you heard of the Isle of Berk?"

"Yes. It's to the northeast of the Isle of Night."

"I was born and raised in Berk. I grew up and married Stoick the Vast, chieftain of the Isle. Hiccup was our son. I had a great family, and a generally happy life. But one night, dragons raided our village. One broke into our house, and I rushed in to protect Hiccup, who was only a babe. But the dragon I met in there was not savage, nor did it wish to harm Hiccup and me. It was a kind and benevolent being, and to my surprise, I saw my own soul reflected in the eyes of the beast." She walked over and laid a hand on the side of Cloudjumper's face. "Cloudjumper must have thought I belonged here, because he stole me away and brought me here." She looked down. "I never had the heart to return to Berk after that. I've been away for twenty years."

"Valka..." I said, unable to fathom the fear and pain she must have experienced, and the sorrow she must have felt every day, knowing she could never return to her son, or her family, living in isolation.

"I'm sorry Lucaria."

"Please don't be sorry. Ever since you took me in, you've filled the gap in my heart where I had lost my family. You..." I hesitated with my next words. How could I say it when she had finally found her true son? How would Hiccup react? And how could I say this when my own family had so recently died? "You've become a mother to me..." I

looked down sheepishly, expecting her to retort saying Hiccup was her true son, or to act awkwardly towards me.

But she smiled, took my hands, and stared deep into my eyes. "And you've become the daughter I've always wished I had."

Hiccup stood off to the side, listening quietly and almost sadly. But Valka pulled him over and embraced him. "Now I have both my son, and my daughter." I looked over at them. Hiccup, my brother? It would take some getting used to...

I glanced over at Toothless and Comet, who were already best friends. They were jumping around, chasing each other, and annoying Cloudjumper. Hiccup turned towards me, and smiled. My brother. I grinned. I could get used to it.

One thing Valka had said confused me though. "You said dragons raided your village? Why on earth would they do that?"

Hiccup turned to me, a grim look on his face. "When vikings first landed on the Isle of Berk, we weren't exactly friendly to the surrounding dragons. And the dragons weren't friendly to us. They raided our village countless times, and in turn we defended ourselves and were forced to kill them to protect our own. When I was younger, I wasn't exactly the strongest of all vikings." He gestured to himself. "Nor am I now. But I was envious of the others because they were strong and headstrong and capable of battling dragons. I tried, but everything I did ended in failure." He shifted his gaze to Toothless, who was presently battling a horde of baby dragons. "Then one night, I shot down a Night Fury. Toothless. Nobody believed me. So I ran out to the forest to find the dragon and prove once and for all I could be like all the others. Yet when I finally found him...I couldn't. I tried, but something in his eyes...reminded me of myself. He was just as scared as I was. So I freed him.

"I observed him over the next few weeks, and our friendship gradually grew. When I shot him down...he lost his left tail fin. He was unable to fly on his own. So I built him a new tail, one that I could control by riding on his back. It took some time to grow used to it, but we learned to work together." His expression turned solemn. "Then I was forced to kill a Monstrous Nightmare in the ring. I couldn't do it. I had to show my father that we didn't need to kill dragons. I dishonored him, and as he turned to violence, the Nightmare turned on me. Toothless rushed to my aid, and almost killed my father to protect me. He was captured, and they took him away in search of the Dragons' Nest. Long story short, we learned that the dragons were hostile due to a Queen Dragon, called the Green Death, who was almost as big as the Bewilderbeast. Toothless and I managed to defeat the dragon, but I lost my leg in the process." He held up his peg leg. "After that, vikings and dragons learned to live side by side. It's been that way for the past few years."

I nodded, contemplating, then looked up at him. "I'm glad everything turned out well in the end. I'm surprised this Green Death was ordering the dragons to attack and pilfer, but not all dragons are as benevolent as the Night Furies."

"By the way, Lucaria, where did you find Comet? I was beginning to think Toothless was the only one left..."

I looked over at Valka, who had been silently listening to our conversation. She nodded.

"You see...Night Furies weren't always rare. In most other isles, yes, they were the rarest of all, and it was highly unlikely to ever see one. But from where I come from...the Isle of Night...the only dragons ever found were Night Furies."

"You mean...Toothless and Comet aren't the last ones?" He asked excitedly, taking my shoulders. I looked up into his eyes, sighing and trying to keep back the inevitable tears.

"They are the very last of their kind, Hiccup. They are only remaining survivors of the Night Furies."

8. Chapter 8

"Let me tell you the story of my people, the Soul Binders," I said quietly. I walked over towards the cliff face and stared down into the water. Valka and Hiccup followed close behind. "Many long years ago, a colony of people were travelling the seas, looking for a place to call home. They landed upon a lush green isle, with gentle harbors for their boats and green pastures for their livestock. When they finally set their sea-weary feet upon the shore, dragons came to meet them. Night Furies. They had come to protect their land. But my people were kind to them, offering them plentiful supplies of fish among others, and the Night Furies grew accustomed to their presence on the island. They did not mind the tiny settlement my people set up.

"Then my people began taming the Night Furies. Well, taming isn't the best word, more like befriending. We work together with our dragons...as one. This is where we ultimately received our name, the Soul Binders. As we learned the ways of our Night Fury companions, we learned of a certain poem, etched into the rock in the center of the Night Fury nest. Every Night Fury on the island nested there, in one huge circle, with a ring of trees surrounding the black patches of scorched earth where the dragons slept. The poem went as followed:

An Isle of Night for the rarest of all, awaiting the day when people would call,

A friendship strong and a friendship sweet; a soul to hold, a soul to keep.

Give my soul to bind, to share, this dragon's soul now in my care.

That is the binding spell. It must be performed in front of the relic where the poem is etched, and the person who is reciting the spell must have a strong relationship with the dragon beside them. Otherwise, it fails. While there was great power and strength behind soul binding, there was also great danger. The relic also held a warning:

_Take heed, those who wish to exploit the magic of the Isle of Night. The dragons who reside here are rare, and their numbers are small. Beware the man who dreams beyond, and openly wishes to control them

all."_

I sighed. This was the flaw with my people. They ignored the warning of the relic. And their folly resulted in the loss of their own lives as well as their dragons'.

"My people ignored the warning, knowing none of their kind would betray their morals of peace and their friendship with their dragons. But they did not count on anyone as cruel and heartless as Drago Bludvist to come."

"Drago Bludvist went to your village?!" Hiccup asked, incredulous.

"Yes...and...he wanted to know our secret. He wanted to control more dragons. He didn't realize the circumstances required, and my people refused to give it to him. He sent his dragons upon them...upon us. They all perished...except me."

Valka laid a hand on my shoulder, stroking a strand of hair back from my face. Hiccup looked down, unsure of what to say or how to react, then took my hand sympathetically.

"As a result, all their Night Furies died. For when the souls are bound, if one half were to perish, the other must perish alongside the other. And so the Night Furies have dwindled down to Comet and Toothless."

"But...But...I don't understand...there have to be other Night Furies somewhere! They can't be the only two. Weren't there wild Night Furies? On other isles?" Hiccup exclaimed.

"Night Furies refused to leave their home. They had everything they ever needed, and didn't need to compete with other dragons for food or shelter. They stayed within their community, and all other dragons kept their distance. But since the island was small, their numbers were forced to remain slightly low. This didn't bother them at all. They didn't need huge, overwhelming population numbers. They were a community where every dragon knew the other, similar to both my village and Berk, I'm sure. Regardless, a Night Fury egg is hatched only once a decade. And because my people grew and expanded into the village, their numbers eventually grew to match the number of Night Furies on the isle, and because everyone wanted a dragon companion..."

"There were no wild Night Furies left," Hiccup completed. "But how did you know for sure? What if there is an egg still waiting out there?"

"We can communicate wordlessly with our dragons, when our souls are bound. Some have the rare and unique ability to do it by strength of friendship alone, but most of the people in my village required the binding spell. We could communicate with the dragons, and they mentioned two eggs, a rare occurrence, that were safely tucked away in a magma-warmed cave, awaiting the day they should hatch. But then disaster struck. About 20 years ago, a few months before I was born, a heavy storm struck the island, grounding the Night Furies and forcing everyone to take shelter in their homes to escape the searing winds and rain that fell like arrows. It was this fateful night when the Nesting Cave was raided. One egg we found hidden deep inside the

cave, positioned safely on a perch surrounded by magma. This egg hatched the same day I was born, but I did not meet her until I was a little older. The other we never heard of again. Since then, only 2 other Night Furies have been born, and both were bonded at the time of the attack."

"Do you think the egg, the lost one, managed to reach Berk somehow?"

"I can only imagine it had. And then it hatched in a wild and unknown place, not knowing any other like it, and it probably got mixed in with the...Green Death, you called it?"

"That must have been what happened. I can't believe it though. Why would anyone steal a Night Fury egg? And how, then, would they lose it?"

"The people who stole the egg might have worked for Drago, though unlikely since it was so long ago, or they had heard of legends of Night Furies and their power and sought to take on for themselves. They were probably shipwrecked on Berk or were attacked by dragons, who took the egg safely away. Otherwise it wouldn't have hatched on Berk. You are lucky to have met Toothless, though. Of all dragons, Night Furies are the most loyal, intelligent, and protective of all."

Hiccup paused, contemplating everything I had just said. Even as I thought back over, I could hardly believe what I was saying. It sounded like a depressing fairy tale, a bad dream that we were waiting to wake up from. But I knew better. We all knew better.

9. Chapter 9

I flew with Comet beside Hiccup and Toothless, watching the way Hiccup adjusted his foot to change the position of the synthetic tail fin. Despite what would normally be a crippling injury, Toothless flew as gracefully as any other Night Fury. They worked surprisingly well together. Their friendship was incredibly unique, unlike anything I had ever seen before. Hiccup had become Toothless' first friend, and while he injured Toothless, he had also become the Night Fury's savior. That, and their understanding of each other, their similar age, everything contributed to a relationship I had never even considered before.

Looking down, I saw the faint outlines of a few Seashockers below us, before they disappeared underneath the surface of the icy waves. I glanced down at Comet, who was curiously watching Toothless, no doubt wondering about the strange contraption that he required to be able to fly. I stroked her ear, fingering the feather that flew back from her left ear. I smiled to myself. I belonged here. Flying upon the back of my most trusted friend, with my family. Adopted I may be, but treated as if blood. Valka and Cloudjumper flew ahead of us. We were on our way to a feeding, and Hiccup seemed a bit flustered.

Valka turned around, holding her hand out. We all stopped, Hiccup looking around confusedly. I snuck a look down, watching the ocean swirling below us. Hiccup caught my eyes and looked down as well, watching with a start as the Bewilderbeast burst up from the ocean, spouting fish. As the fish rained down, the Sanctuary dragons flitted

about and snatched up fish. Toothless looked excitedly at Hiccup. Hiccup agreed with a laugh, and they began a nose dive as Toothless rushed to snatch fish out of the air.

I looked down at Comet, who already had a determined look in her eyes. We had practiced this many times. We entered a dive, spiraling, the ocean twisting closer and closer towards us. A split second before we hit water, Comet spread her wings wide, barely scraping the surface of the water with her wingtips, and surged upwards vertically, wings flapping quickly and powerfully. We veered the left, looping around sideways and completing a smooth backflip. I clung tightly to Comet's neckstrap, my thighs tight against her side, body hugging the contours of her neck.

Comet's flight path evened out, and I held my arms out wide, feeling the wind rushing against my face, through my hair, threatening to push me off of Comet's back. I loved the thrill, the danger, the pure joy of soaring through an open sky, plunging through clouds. Taking a deep breath, I brushed the side of Comet's neck, slowly standing up. The wind was furious, trying to rip me off and throw me into the air. I obliged. I ran towards Comet's tail, taking a flying leap and diving downwards.

I heard Hiccup call my name, but I paid no heed. Comet was back by my side in an instant, releasing a happy trill. I reached out a hand, and she carefully tipped to the side, brushing it with a wingtip. I looked down, watching the wide ocean below grow closer. I reached out, fingers finding the neckstrap. I pulled myself back towards Comet. She went into a spin, but rather than spinning sideways, she entered a series of front flips. Her wings held out wide for balance, she turned over and over, finally pulling out of momentum and evening her flight pattern once again. I breathed heavily. The front flips always made me dizzy. We soared back up towards Hiccup.

"Wow. Nice flying." Hiccup commented, earning a happy coo from Comet.

"Not so bad yourself, cripple." I smiled, and he frowned at the nickname. "Kidding," I laughed. "You two fly amazingly well together. I can't believe that life-threatening injury has brought you two so close together in such a short amount of time. It's quite astonishing."

"Thanks Lucaria." He looked down at Toothless, who was still struggling to swallow his mouthful of fish. We flew straight for a few more seconds, and a question came to mind. I knew it was personal, and knew I probably shouldn't be so nosy, but I had to ask.

"Did you ever miss or think about Valka?"

The question caught him off guard, and he stammered a bit before pausing to really think about the question. "I often wondered what had happened to her. I was told she was stolen away, and when I was older, I was told she was eaten by dragons. And at the time, it seemed all too real of a possibility." He looked down, as if deep in thought. "Though I think I never truly believed she was dead. All those years, they told me she was gone, yet some part of me knew she had to be out there still. It just didn't understand why she hadn't returned to us-to my father and me. And as ashamed as I am to admit

it-as I grew older, my mind stopped wondering, accepting her absence as a fact. But now, oh what a wonder it is to see her again! I can't believe it, I..." he paused, looking over at me. I must have had a solemn look on my face. "Are you okay?" He asked quietly, barely loud enough to be heard over the wind.

"Oh, I'm..." I was ready to say 'fine', ready to dismiss this growing feeling of pain and sorrow that was rising up inside of me. My heart was too broken, too tired, and I knew the only way to release the growing ache was to share it-finally-with someone other than Comet and Valka. I sighed. "No. I'm...I'm not okay. I'm incredibly happy that you and Valka are reunited, but...it reopens the wound that refuses to heal. My mother, my father...both lost. For good. I saw the fire burning on their shoulders, catching in their clothes...reflected in their eyes. The fear. The pain. I saw them die, Hiccup. And I could do nothing to save them. Nothing to help them. Nothing to protect them..." The tears streamed freely, I did not hold them back. The suffering I had kept close so long poured out, and I allowed it. "Of everyone who could have escaped, and survived, why did it have to be me? Why not my father, the strong, generous, benevolent chieftain of our clan? Why not my mother, the healer, who cared for every human and dragon upon that island? Why me?" I looked down, fists clenched around the neck strap, eyes shut tight. When I looked up, he was watching me with a expression that held as much sorrow as mine.

"Lucaria..." He seemed at a loss for words. What can you say to someone who has experienced pain like that? There is nothing to be said. But I found comfort in his presence alone, he need not speak.

"No need for words, Hiccup...thank you. I had kept that in for so long. Valka knew, and I hated to burden her with my own grief when she had so many other important things to do. But you...you comfort me in a way Valka, nor Comet, cannot. Perhaps it is because you are so close to my age, perhaps it is because you are...my...my new family..." Again I hesitated with my words. Acceptance was something, I realized, I had never worried about until I had lost everyone I knew. And now, when companionship was what I longed for most, I was fearful of being rejected or turned away to fend for myself.

"I will always be a brother to you, Lucaria." He smiled, reaching out a hand. I took it, squeezing it lightly. I allowed the joy to flood my entire being, lifting my heart and freeing my soul. Where the ashes of old flowers lay, new flowers grew, nurtured by the memory of the past generations. My old family remains only in my memories now, and there they shall stay, cherished and never forgotten. But there also a new seed started growing, a new chance, a new family, and with an enlightened heart, I embraced my new life with open arms.

10. Chapter 10

Valka and Hiccup had flown ahead, aiming towards some air vents that rose up from the sea. I followed behind slowly, watching them as they flew together, mother and son. This was a family. Bloodborne, bound together by more than just loving embraces. I sighed.

I felt a sudden pang of guilt as images of my own family, faded and torn at the edges, found their way into my mind. My mother's golden,

waist-length hair that she normally kept in a single, thick braid. When I was younger, I had loved to pick flowers and place them in her braid, or as high as I could reach. She would smile, and with laughter like bells, would lean down and pick another flower to put behind my ear.

"_You have the most beautiful hair Lucaria, my dearest!" _She would always say, running her fingers through my curly mix of bright blonde and light brown hair. She would often braid it into a ring around my head, leaving small strands to decorate my face. I missed those days terribly, remembering how she looked more like a goddess than a viking. She had a thin frame, one that I inherited, and yet was strong enough to haul huge logs of timber single-handedly for reparations on the village after a storm. She had piercing green eyes, and an incredibly soft face. She looked almost as delicate as the tender white irises I placed in her hair.

And then there was my father, with his short brown beard and messy brown hair. He kept his hair fairly long, and it stuck out at wild angles. The bright red feather that was a symbol of his rank hung from the left side of his face, attached to a strand of hair. It was a stunning contrast to his image. His dark brown eyes held compassion for not only his family and dragon, but for his village as well. Whatever he did, he accomplished for the benefit of our little society.

"_One day, Lucaria, you will grow to become a great chieftain, perhaps even better than me."_ He would swoop me up into a hug, nuzzling me close. I could feel the prickliness of his beard, see the love and hope that lingered in the deep pools of brown of his eyes. Chieftain was a high honor to have, and though it was inherited, it was not a job to be taken lightly. My father worked long days and had to focus on making sure there was enough food for both the people and dragons. Yet I had learned much from simply watching him. His upright and forwards demeanor, his grand voice that could carry across the whole isle and yet soften when he was whispering a song into my ear. His relations with the other people of the town, who adored him and treated him with the utmost respect, which he returned gratefully.

I sighed, finally forcing the thoughts out of my head. I felt a deep sense of fear, wondering if my actions had caused my family's spirits to abandon me. Would they be hurt that I turned to a new family? Would they frown upon my desire to become a daughter to Valka?

I frowned. My family was much more understanding than I was making them out to be. I had lost everyone I knew, and I was sure they realized this. They would want me to find someone to be close to, to have another friend and even someone who could be a mother or father to me in their now eternal absence. I felt tears prick the backs of my eyes, but I blinked them away. I needed to stay strong, if not for myself than for Comet. She was suffering just as much as I was, and there was no point in feeling sorry for myself when I was still blessed enough to have my best friend at my side.

Comet had turned her head to look at me, knowing my thoughts, and seeing my memories. She gazed up at me with her vivid green eyes. I stroked a hand down the side of her neck, eyes closed, and I leaned down so I was right beside her ears.

"It's okay Comet. I'm fine. I just...I miss our family is all." Her

already soft gaze softened even more. I lay there, stroking her ears and neck, finding comfort in her presence and care.

As I returned to an upright position, I noticed Valka and Hiccup had already found the air vents. Comet and I sped up to reach them, when I saw something completely bizarre. Hiccup had leaped from Toothless' back, and was not falling-but flying. We flew up beside Valka and Cloudjumper who had paused to watch in awe. We exchanged glances, before she flew after him with Cloudjumper. I followed suit, flying below them, in case something happened.

His flight suit was fascinating, allowing him to fly with little help from Toothless. A human, flying? The notion was preposterous, but here he was, right in front of my very eyes, flying through the air. But suddenly, through the misted clouds, a huge pillar of rock appeared, and he grew nervous, calling out for Toothless. Toothless struggled to reach him though, his tail not as maneuverable when locked in place.

"Hiccup!" I cried, flying quickly up with Comet, only to see him disappear with Toothless through a hole in the rock. The base of the rock pillar reared up in front of us, and Comet took evasive actions, only to find herself caught in a maze underneath the pillar of stone. The sea water roiled beneath us as we navigated the tight passages, her wings scraping against the rock walls. I felt her anxiety grow as we continued deeper into the depths of the rock. The roof descended, and Comet's tail began to hit water.

I grew nervous as the water continued to rise, brushing her legs. If it rose any more, we would be drowned. Comet could swim, but if the cave roof disappeared underwater, there might be no hope for me. Turning around was not an option now. Comet could not turn her long form around in the enclosed space. Sensing my fear, she let out a low whimper.

I held my breath, praying that the passage opened up soon. Comet was struggling to keep airborne, the rock walls rubbing and scraping her wingtips raw. She whimpered with pain, and I leaned down close to her neck, whispering comforting words into her ears. Suddenly, the passage tightened into a tiny bottleneck. I considered the bottleneck before completely flattening myself along her back. She pulled her legs up as tight as possible, and despite her torn wingtips, sped up towards the minuscule opening. It was either this, or drown.

I closed my eyes tightly, afraid to watch. My other senses took over, and it felt as if time were slowing to a halt. I could smell the saltiness of the seawater, could feel the cold, dense chill given off by the water-drenched stone. I felt Comet take one last wing beat, tucking her wings tightly against her body. I heard her cry out in pain as I felt the unforgiving stone brush against the top of my head. I felt the cold rush of icy water against my skin as we crashed through to the other side of the hole.

We landed in a pool of water, shallow and strangely lit up. I did not pay as much attention to the water and surroundings as I should have, but Comet was my first priority, and I could tell, from the pain that radiated into my mind, that she was injured.

I quickly dismounted and rushed to her face, stroking her snout and examining her head and face for injuries. She shook her head roughly

before letting out a low moan, throwing her snout towards her wingtips.

I tenderly held one of her wingtips, which was indeed red and bleeding from continued contact with the rough cave wall. I tore off an edge of my skirt and dipped it in the water, gingerly blotting the blood. Comet whimpered when I put pressure to stop the bleeding, but she remained still as I tended her other wing. She was otherwise unharmed, to my intense relief.

She stood up and walked over to me, snuffling in my hair, drawing back quickly as a dark substance clung to her snout. I ran a hand through my hair with a sigh. A small amount of blood had pooled around a cut on the top of my head, though it was not deep. I assumed it was from the rock that I believed to have passed under. I stooped down and rinsed my hair in the water, cringing as it stained the crystal blue waters red. I paused as Comet began to growl.

All around us, a pod of seashockers circled. I realized with a start that it was their bioluminescence that lit up the cave. I backed up beside Comet. There seemed to be no immediate way out of the cave, though a small patch of dry rock lay just outside the circling pod. Comet should not fly with her injured wings, though one large leap might suffice to reach the rocky platform...

Comet, whose mind was following my thoughts, snorted in aggression towards the advancing seashockers. I slowly reached up towards her neck strap, watching the predatory glances of the the water dragons. I hesitated, watching their red eyes glinting. I was almost paralyzed in fear. A slight shift by Comet snapped me out of my trance, and I prepared myself to leap.

In one quick movement, I launched myself up towards Comet's back, and she leaped towards the dry rock. The seashockers immediately released a buzz of electric shock, which I felt even in the air. Thankfully, Comet managed to reach the rock, and the electricity missed us.

Barely.

I tumbled from her back as she landed, hitting the stone with a loud thud that echoed about the cavern.

With cries of anger and frustration, the seashockers surged the rock, leaping at us and attempting to whack us with their lightning-infused tails. I scrambled hastily onto Comet's back, and we glanced around wildly for an escape. A passage opened up towards the ceiling, and without a moments hesitation, Comet lunged for the exit. She cried out in pain as she took off, but she persevered for my safety. With a few quick wing beats, she had reached the passage, and soon we had escaped the cavern and were finally back into the safety of the open air.

11. Chapter 11

"We have to make it back to the Sanctuary, Comet. Please." I whispered into her ears. She forced herself to fly higher. I could feel her pain, but there was nothing I could do until we made it back to the Sanctuary.

As we grew near, Comet began to tremble horribly, the pain beginning to wear her down. I stroked her neck, the edges of her wings, trying all I could to assure her I was there and that we were almost home.

The Sanctuary loomed into view, and I breathed a sigh of relief. If Comet could hold only a few seconds longer...

We flew into the kitchen and Comet, immediately after landing, collapsed. Valka gasped as she ran to look at Comet's wings, which were bleeding ferociously. As I looked up after dismounting, I noticed two strangers and two dragons huddled near Hiccup within the kitchen. I froze.

"Lucaria." Valka stood up and embraced me, then shot a worried look towards Comet. "One second, dear."

She disappeared momentarily. I turned towards the strangers that were standing in the kitchen, looking towards me awkwardly. I looked curiously at them, waiting patiently until Valka had returned with aid for Comet.

Valka came back with ice and bandages in her arms. I took them and knelt down beside Comet, tenderly wrapping them around Comet's wings. She cringed as I put pressure on the wounds, and I could sense she was trying hard to restrain from crying out. I stroked her snout gently, attempting to calm her down. She gave a weak, gentle purr and nudged one of her wingtips before curling up and falling asleep. I stood by her a moment longer, just watching the gentle rise and fall of her chest. She deserved the rest.

I turned back towards where Valka and Hiccup were standing beside the strangers. "Well? Are you going to introduce me?"

"This is Stoick, and Gobber. From Berk," Valka said, though I could sense the hesitant joy in her voice. "You remember, don't you?"

"I do. I remember you telling me many stories of your home when we first met." I turned to Gobber and Stoick. "It's a pleasure to meet you both."

Gobber reached out and shook my hand enthusiastically. I gave him a smile and a gentle nod, smiling and rubbing his Hotburple's nose. The Rumblehorn beside me nudged my arm, and I turned to stroke the side of his snout. I assumed he belonged to Stoick. I turned, and holding out my hand to Stoick, was met with a bear hug.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Lucaria. I've heard much about you since...we first reunited." He looked over lovingly towards Valka. "How long have you been here?"

"About several months now, maybe a year? I don't rightfully know. It's definitely been a while," I laughed. I could hardly believe this huge viking was Hiccup's father. They looked so...different. But then again, I took after my mother much more than my father.

Another stab of remorse filled me and the kind smile that had been lingering on my face vanished. Stoick's face crossed with concern.

"Are you alright, Lucaria?"

"I'll be okay, thank you. Just...memories."

He nodded his head, and I assumed Valka had told him my story. I was grateful I wouldn't need to tell it. I don't think my mind could have handled it. I retired to a corner of the kitchen, sitting behind Gobber, who gave me a smile and pat on the shoulder. I watched as they began cooking (rather making raw fish shish kabobs), and watched as Hiccup excitedly ran about helping and commenting on this and that.

I sat back with a peaceful smile, tuning out the cheerful banter, until all of a sudden it stopped. I sat up, curious as to why silence had fallen so suddenly.

Valka had a small mug, and was gathering glacial water that ran from a large icicle on end of the kitchen. Stoick stood on the other end, sneaking hesitant and awkward glances towards her. Whistling broke the silence, and I saw Valka freeze up. I watched curiously as Stoick walked up behind Valka, taking the jug from her hands.

He began singing slowly, and I recognized the tune. It was a marriage song. An old, ancient, long-used marriage song my ancestors had used as well. My father had sang the same song to my mother before he proposed to her. I remembered my mother and father singing the tune occasionally at night when I was in bed, and heard the tapping of feet on the floor as they danced. A wave of feeling washed over me, but this time, it was wonder. I had never seen the dance before, and it stirred an ancient feeling inside me.

I'll swim and sail on savage seas...

With ne'er a fear of drowning...

And gladly ride the waves of life...

If you will marry me...

His voice froze my blood. He paused after every verse, searching for a reaction, anything from Valka. His voice was pleading, searching for the long-lost love and passion that had disappeared so many years ago. The emotion held within those words hung heavily in the room.

No scorching sun...

Nor freezing cold...

Will...

It was here where Gobber intervened loudly (and not so melodically), finishing the verse "stop me on my journey" enthusiastically, but breaking the emotional atmosphere. Stoick and Hiccup glared at him, and he sat down with a sheepish "sorry."

If you will promise me your heart...

And love...

He sighed heavily, turning away slightly from Valka. I held my breath, knowing it was Valka's cue to come in. But she stayed turned away from him, her body tense. For a moment, I was afraid she would not continue the song. And then, with a shaky breath, a beautiful voice rang out through the air, and Valka had turned to Stoick, whose face was filled with surprised relief.

The song began to fill the air, Valka's voice clear and beautiful, Stoick's voice ringing harmoniously hearty and deep. The dance began, and my eyes widened as it unfolded before us, the unique and quickening pace matching my racing heartbeat. I looked over at Hiccup, who was watching the scene with a huge smile, in wonder. Their voices blended and joined together so perfectly, and I could hear my parents' voices in my head. All too soon, the song was over, and Gobber's voice was shattering the ice around us, Toothless pawing at his ears.

I watched with a small smile as they joined together, the entire family, pleading Valka to return home with them. With a laugh and smile, she agreed, and with a snarky comment from Gobber, they all began to laugh. I took another step into the background. Where would I go when she returned to Berk? Once again, I had an overwhelming feeling of intrusion. This was a true, honest family, and I felt isolated, as if I were an outsider, an intruder upon them. How could Valka see me as a daughter when she had her true family again?

"Lucaria?" Valka called, her face lit up with a joyous smile. "Come!" She held out her arm for me to join in, and the previous feelings of doubt melted away. With a few timid steps, I joined them, and as Hiccup pulled me into the circle, and a broad smile approached my lips. Even though I was not bloodborne, this family still saw me as one of their own and accepted me. It felt nice to be accepted. Wonderful. We separated, everyone laughing with smiles lingering on their faces. Seeing Stoick and Valka reunited, I could tell, both fascinated and elated Hiccup, and rightfully so. If only I could be reunited with my family...

Suddenly Toothless let out a growl, glancing out of the kitchen towards the open shores of the Sanctuary. We went out to look, until suddenly an explosion broke on the side of the mountain, followed by several more. Valka ran to see what was happening, followed closely by the rest of us, exchanging worried glances. She skidded to a halt on the edge of an ice spike, glaring down at the hideous army gathered below us. Thousands of men and armored dragons littered the land below us, bombarding the mountain with explosions and sending armored dragons upon ours of the Sanctuary. Hundreds of ships swarmed the seas, and dragon traps were clustered on the shore, awaiting the helpless dragons that were defending the Sanctuary.

Drago's army. I looked out over the scene, fear rising up into my chest.

War had come.

12. Chapter 12

My heart beat heavily in my chest as I looked out over the army below us. I was terrified. What were we supposed to do against an army that

large? We had a Bewilderbeast on our side, yes, but I feared the odds were too heavy against us. Dragons poured from the mountain, attacking the traps and armored dragons that were advancing on the sanctuary.

Valka, Hiccup, Stoick, and Gobber had already turned to get the help of their dragons. I dashed to Comet, running feverish fingers down her snout, worried by the way they trembled and shook. She snorted, awakening and looking at me curiously.

"The battle has begun," I whispered quietly beside her face. "You have to stay in here. You're injured, and I couldn't stand to lose you." She snorted, attempting to stand up. I pushed down on her shoulder, and she let out a small mewl of sadness, returning to the floor. I stroked her wing, glancing at the injured wingtips. It pained me to force her to stay, but I couldn't risk her going into battle.

"You're too injured, Comet. You can't fly. And I don't want you to be captured...you'll be safer in here. I'll be okay. Valka and Hiccup are out there, they'll protect me. Just stay in here and recover your strength." I kissed her forehead, and she cooed, returning her head to the ground after a small, loving nudge to the side of my face. I traced a finger down her forehead, and touched the amulet around her neck, whispering prayers for good luck.

I stood, and ran into the kitchen area, grabbing a sword from a basket, kept only for dire circumstances. And this situation was dire. My feet found the exit, my mind whirring as I took in the battle scene in front of me. I wished Comet were with me, wished I could have the advantage of the air, but I would not let it discourage me.

I carefully studied the scene, anxiety keeping my feet glued to the ground. I would not charge in randomly, without aim. I would surely be injured, or worse, killed. A Hobblegrunt landed beside me, eyeing me curiously. I ran a hand down its side, and it nudged my arm. I placed a hand on its neck and swung up onto its back. It let out a cry and took into the air, giving me an aerial view of the battle scene. We were outnumbered. The odds were stacked overwhelmingly against us. My heart fell as I saw the ships clustered on our shores.

A small glimmer of hope flared in my chest as I remembered our alpha. As long as the Bewilderbeast was on our side, there was a chance we could survive this onslaught. I took a deep breath, urging the Hobblegrunt closer to the ground. An armored dragon swooped down and latched its metal coated claws onto the neck of the Hobblegrunt, which let out a cry and swung around to battle. In one quick swoop it twisted to face the armored dragon, and I found myself slipping through thin air.

"Comet!" I cried, but my voice caught in my throat. Comet could not help me. Could not hear me. Could not save me. Suddenly I felt something catch my arm, and I grasped onto it, my heart pounding. Cloudjumper glanced down at me, giving a signature hum before placing me down on the ground. I watched as he and Valka raced towards the mountain, and a smile spread across my face as the alpha began to break through the protective ice of the mountain. We were saved.

The Bewilderbeast launched its attack, and the dragons of the sanctuary rallied to its cry. As I watched them swoop down upon Drago's men and traps, I noticed several dragon riders in the fray that I did not recognize. They seemed to be helping our cause. Were they friends of Hiccup? From Berk?

Forcing myself to focus, I glanced across the battlefield, finding a weak spot where only a few traps lay. Dashing over, I attacked the men guarding them, using the hilts of my sword to knock them out, only using the blade to disarm them. I could not bring myself to kill them. With the guards out of the way, I turned to destroying the traps. Snatching up a long piece of wood, I found the smoking remains of a Snuffer trap, and lit the torch on fire. I threw several burning torches onto the unguarded traps, watching them blaze up and crumble apart. I was content to be doing my share.

Then disaster struck.

I heard Drago shout, and the the hairs of my neck stood on end. A heavy surge of water swelled upwards from the shore and my heart stopped beating.

Drago controlled a Bewilderbeast.

Immediately the beast challenged our own Bewilderbeast, and I saw Valka rush to protect our own. I watched in despair as even she could not stop their primal instincts. Brutally they battled, their horns clashing and cracking against one another. I was frozen, unsure if I should do what I could to help our Bewilderbeast or return to destroying traps and freeing dragons. My mind was incapable of deciding. My feet refused to move, my eyes glued to the battle between the great beasts in front of me.

Our Bewilderbeast faltered, the horns of the black beast around its neck, and with a cry, it toppled to the ground.

"NO!" I shouted, running several steps forwards before tripping and falling to my knees. But it was too late. There was nothing to be done. Our Bewilderbeast was gone. For a moment, time seemed to stop. Everyone watched the desolation of our one hope. Silence hung in the air.

The black beast let out a roar, and a deep pain wracked my brain. I stumbled, legs moving instinctively towards the black beast. I fought control of my thoughts, my head splitting with the effort of keeping my own mind. Through my blurry eyes I saw Valka falling from Cloudjumper, but my my eyes slitted and I lost control. Without seeing, without thinking, I moved towards the Bewilderbeast, as if it had taken control of my very willpower. I struggled, seeing the other dragons gathering around, my conscious thought fading in and out.

I fell to my knees before the black Bewilderbeast, my mind focused on nothing more than bowing before my King. The sword fell from my hands and I bowed even lower. The Bewilderbeast moved from us, but my body felt rigid and stiff as stone. I remained bowed, obedient to my master.

I do not know how long I knelt, but I heard a loud war call from Drago, and the Bewilderbeast moved away. Feeling flooded my mind and I stumbled out of my kneeled position, my eyes teared and the light

flooding my dilated pupils. I stood for a moment, recovering my senses, trying to remember where I was and what I was doing. Where was Valka? Why was Drago here?

I turned to see where the Bewilderbeast was heading, and my memory came rushing back to me. The beast was advancing upon Hiccup, who was facing down Drago. Alerts went off in my mind and, scooping up my sword, I broke into a run.

"Hiccup!" I called, but I was too far away. I stumbled over the unconscious body of a soldier, and I forced myself to take a deep breath and continue. I had to help him, before Drago hurt him. Or killed him. I watched as Toothless pawed at his face and writhed under the gaze of the black beast. What was happening?

Then Toothless turned. Focused his gaze on Hiccup. Advanced. Terror filled my mind and I ran even faster, the distance between us closing, but not fast enough. From the corner of my eye I saw Stoick, running to Hiccup's aid as well.

Toothless spread his wings. So close. I dashed over the ruins of traps and discarded spears. Stoick was drawing close as well, and for a moment I believed we could save him. Toothless' mouth began to glow, and I knew he was preparing a fireball. Stoick was just feet away. Hiccup had his arms stretched out, trying to hold back both Toothless and his father. The whole scene in front my eyes was unreal, as if this were a dream, no, a nightmare. Time slowed. I knew I was too late.

"Hiccup!" I cried, the words pouring from my mouth in a fevered scream.

A flash of blue. Shards of ice. Silence.

13. Chapter 13

I stood there, frozen in shock, as Hiccup ran to his father, amid strangled cries. Valka stumbled down, and after checking for Stoick's normally strong heartbeat, looked towards Hiccup with despair in her eyes. Tears began to pour down my face, my body rigid. Slowly, I forced myself to move to Stoick's side. The other dragon riders gathered around us, but I barely noticed their presence. My hands trembled as I sank to my knees before Stoick.

So suddenly reunited. And so suddenly torn apart. The anger, horror, and sorrow overcame my mind and I let out a long, silent sob. I felt a movement beside me, and saw the black nose and green eyes of Toothless. His expression was one of sad confusion, and he came closer, nudging Stoick's motionless hand.

"NO! GET AWAY FROM HIM! GO ON! GET OUTTA HERE! GET AWAY!" Hiccup shouted, voice enraged with anger and loss. Toothless jumped back, puzzlement in his big green eyes, no longer slitted. He turned and fled the scene, the uncertainty and pain still evident on his face.

"It's not his fault...you know that..." Valka said quietly to Hiccup. His head was still hung, tears streaming down his face and dripping onto the eerily still chest of his father. I looked up from the

ground to see Drago turn away, rallying his men for their attack on Berk. I was torn between chasing him down, or admitting defeat. If I tried to fight now, I would fight alone.

I was going to try.

Right as my mind solidified and I rose with sudden sureness, the Bewilderbeast let out a deafening roar. I cringed as an overwhelming desire to follow Drago overcame me, and quickly I began to lose focus on my mind as the haziness fogged my vision. My feet acted of their own accord; no, I was moving my feet towards the fleet of ships moored in the bay. I was going to Berk. I was going to help Drago overtake Berk. That's right. I had to listen to the alpha. I had to listen to Drago.

I felt restraints on my arms, and I struggled against them. They clung tighter, and I began to fight, unable to see the faces through the orange haze clouding my eyes.

"Let me go!" I shouted, wrenching against the ever-tightening grips keeping me from following my master, from following the alpha. From joining Drago. No matter how hard I pulled, they refused to release me.

I cannot remember for how long I fought to get away. I could only see the disappearing figures of Drago and the ships and the great black mass of the Bewilderbeast. I was being left behind. There was nothing more I could do.

Suddenly the desire began to slowly subside, and I could see clearly again. A deep hollow was left in my chest, as if an arrow had gone straight through my heart. The fleet of ships was in the far distance. A girl with blonde hair and a strange man with tattoos on his chin were holding my arms and shoulders, giving me strange looks. They released their hold on me, faces still harboring wariness.

"Lucaria." Valka said, her eyes harsh and tone low. "Where are you going?"

"I was going to follow Drago to Berk and..." I paused. What was I saying?! "Wait...no! No, I wasn't, I was..." I shook my head vigorously. No, Drago was my enemy. So was the black Bewilderbeast. They were the enemy. Why was I following them?

"Lucaria?" Valka's eyes held curiosity now, and they were softer, not as hardened as they had been before.

"I was going to attack Drago...and then...my mind hazed...it was cloudy and foggy and..." I struggled to remember. "I had a desire to follow them. No, not a desire. A need. I had to go with them. To help them..." I struggled to sort through the confusing emotions swirling in my head. Whose side was I on?

"Why would you help them?"

"I...I don't know. I don't! They're the bad guys...right?"

I was given incredulous looks by the group, and I saw Hiccup rise out of the corner of my eye.

"What kind of game do you think this is?!" He shouted, tears dripping from his cheeks and his face flushed. "My father is gone, and you were going to help Drago? Whose side are you on?!"

I took a step back, confused and lost. "Y-yours! Right? We're helping the dragons, right? Keeping them safe from Drago?"

"You even have to ask?!" He cried, turning away from me.

"I'm sorry! I just...I heard the cry of the alpha and I couldn't help myself...I just..." I broke into tears, upset that he was so angry with me. Valka inhaled sharply and turned me towards her quickly, looking expectantly into my eyes.

"It was the alpha?"

"It was his cry, I think? After that I forgot what I was doing..." I sniffed, crossing my arms protectively.

"No...it can't be..." Valka turned from me, pacing away before turning back with enlightenment of her face. "The alpha's cry! The souls are bound! You're reacting to the alpha the same way as the dragons."

Hiccup whirled around to face us, his brow furrowed. "Comet?"

"Yes, Comet!" Valka exclaimed. "The souls are bound, so their soul is one. When Comet was affected by the control of the alpha, it affected Lucaria in the same manner. She did not willingly choose to follow Drago. It was the alpha's command affecting her through her bond with Comet."

"Wait. Since the alpha was able to take control of Comet's mind...the alpha's command travelled through our combined soul and managed to overtake my mind as well?" I asked, attempting to clarify the outrageous idea.

"Essentially, yes. Whatever Comet felt at the time was transferred to your mind through your conjoined soul."

The group around us looked to each other in bewilderment, but Hiccup's face fell. He approached me sullenly, averting his eyes and avoiding my gaze.

"Lucaria, I'm sorry..."

I leaped into his arms and held him close, hugging him tightly. I did not care about his previous words. I was simply relieved I had done no harm under my spell and that Hiccup, even after my unconscious betrayal, had forgiven me.

He returned my hug, leaning his head against mine with a heavy sigh. Over his shoulder I could see Stoick's body still lying among the ice, and I was unable to force back the tears that slipped down my cheeks.

"If only I could have resisted the alpha..." I said quietly, upset that there was nothing more I could have done. I should have saved them. I should have protected them. Stoick might still be with

us.

"You can't blame yourself," Hiccup whispered into my ear.
"Please."

I closed my eyes and leaned against him, taking a deep breath. Perhaps he was right, it wasn't entirely my fault. But I would never forgive Drago for his actions. Fury boiled up in my blood, and I grew angrier than ever. First my tribe and my family, along with all of the Night Furies. Then the Bewilderbeast. And now Stoick.

I pulled back from Hiccup, looking around the group. "This isn't over. Not yet. Not while I'm still alive. I will avenge our family, our lost friends and companions. He will suffer. He will pay." After such heated words my anger lessened, and a wave of calm washed over me. I glanced back towards Stoick. I sank to my knees beside him, and placed a hand over his dormant heart.

"I'm sorry..." I whispered, lowering my face to his chest. "I'm sorry I couldn't save you. I wish I could have spent more time with you, and Valka, and Hiccup, seen you together as a family. But in your place, I shall protect them with my very life. This I promise."

14. Chapter 14

The sorrow that hung in the air weighed down my shoulders and turned my footsteps to lead. The dark brown wood of the ship reflected in the water, a white cloth draped across the pyre.

I tuned out the words Gobber spoke in honor of Stoick, instead lost in my own whirling thoughts and regrets. The sudden realization of the alpha's control angered me, and scared me. How could I defend my family when I couldn't keep control of my own mind?

Hiccup shot his arrow, centering it below the pyre. I lifted my bow, gazing into the flaming arrow, before releasing the string and watching as a volley of fire rained majestically down upon Stoick's ship. His final resting place.

Sobs overcame me and I struggled to keep my solemn composure. I had known Stoick for mere moments, but in those moments of reunion with Valka I had seen a delicacy, a protectiveness, a tender love within Stoick that made my heart ache. Their long-lost love, so recently reignited, was so quickly wrenched apart and stolen away from them forever. And Hiccup-I remembered the wonder and awe on his face during the dance Valka and Stoick had performed. His face held such joy, his pure exhilaration with the reunion of the two people he loved most.

And just as soon as he learned how a true family felt, what it was like to see the spark of love and care that he had lost so many years ago, everything was torn brutally away from him. My heart ached terribly and the tears showed no sign of slowing. His words, now penetrating my sorrowed thoughts, reached deep into my soul and pulled painfully at my heartstrings. I closed my eyes, finding it too hard to look at him, highlighted by the roaring flames of his father's funeral.

Again I became lost in my own thoughts, separated from the rest, once

again isolated from Hiccup and Valka and the others who had known Stoick. I took a step back.

Then Valka's voice, though quiet, rang through my head, with a phrase powerful and potent.

"You have the heart of a chief and the soul of a dragon."

I raised my head. Valka was right. Hiccup had formed a forbidden bond, had changed the hearts of those unwilling to change, and had brought worlds together that had once been torn apart. He was strong. He had brought our worlds together in harmony, and it was up to him to protect that bond.

I would help him. Regardless of my regrets, my pain, my sorrow, I would give my life to help him avenge the life of his father.

It was not only Stoick whom I was avenging. My family had suffered the same brutal fate, had suffered under the brutal flames of dragons led by a madman. My whole tribe had been lost to his power-hungry rampage, and I would do whatever I could to put their souls at ease, to restore hope to the spirits of man and dragon alike that I knew looked upon us to protect the peace.

I had to defend Valka, my mentor and mother who has watched over me since that fateful day I lost my entire family. I had to defend Hiccup, my friend and brother who showed me a kindness I had not known before. I had to defend Comet, my lifelong companion and soul mate, the dragon who had grown up with me and knew me better than I even knew myself.

Comet.

Slipping away from the group still mourning, I ran to Comet, who stood at the edge of the cliff, eyes scanning the ravaged battlefield. She bounded down to meet me, crying out to me. I wrapped my arms around her neck as she nudged against my cheek, wrapping her wings around me. We stood there, resting in each other's embrace, as tears cascaded down my cheeks. The smooth feeling of her scales under my fingertips soothed me, reminded me that she still remained by my side. A gentle purr emanated from her throat as she tilted her head closer to mine. Hesitantly I pulled back and stared into her eyes. Sorrow clung to the rich green, relief lingering among sad understanding. She nudged closer against me, the warmth of her body relaxing the tension that had tightened my body over the past few days. I collapsed to the ground as my legs gave out. She caught me with a tender wing, lowering me and curling around me.

I cried against her neck, clutching the amulet that hung against her chest. The symbol of our everlasting friendship hummed against my fingers as she cooed beside me, attempting to calm me down. All the pain and sorrow poured out of me in her embrace, and she gently stroked my arm with a healing wingtip.

I loved her more than any other. She was my friend. My family. My soul mate.

End
file.